

them near the beach. The natives procure the young birds and tie them by the leg and feed them till they are tame. Afterwards they let them loose, and they go out to sea to get their food, and return to their perches in the villages at intervals.

I cannot say to what species the *Carpophaga* is referable, not having seen it myself. Mr. Jansen procured young ones in May and June; but he, thinking they were the same as the Pigeon found in Samoa (*C. pacifica*), did not preserve any specimens. Natives of the Ellice Islands who were in Samoa when I left there, told me their pigeon is like the Samoan species, "except that it is smaller, owing to its food being less plentiful." That is their own explanation of the cause of difference. They say it feeds almost entirely on the fruit of the native fig (*Ficus*, sp.). They also tell me it is not gregarious in those small islands as it is in Samoa during part of the year. As far as they know it does not migrate, but may always be found sparsely distributed over the islands.

So far as I have been able to learn, no Pigeon occurs in the Gilbert Islands; but a *Carpophaga* occurs in the Union or Tokelau Islands. Mr. Jansen tells me that all the birds he procured in the Ellice Islands, which are included in the foregoing list, are found also in the Union Islands. This may probably be considered nearly a complete list of the avifauna of those small atolls.

6. Note on the Dentition of *Cuscus*.

By EDWARD R. ALSTON, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.

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In reporting last year on the Rev. G. Brown's collection from New Ireland and the vicinity¹, I observed that the two specimens of *Cuscus* contained in it differed from the characters usually given of *C. orientalis* in having but two small teeth behind the large lower incisors, and in wanting the small extra upper premolar. At the same time I corroborated Mr. Waterhouse's remark² that the number of functionless teeth is not always trustworthy in this group, and observed that it must be left to future investigation to show whether the New-Ireland Phalangers were or were not constant in the peculiarity of their teeth.

Mr. Sclater has now kindly placed in my hands a second small collection received from Mr. Brown, consisting of one example of *Mus browni*, Alst., one of *Uromys rufescens*, Alst., ten of *Belideus ariel*, Gould, and eight of *Cuscus orientalis*, Pall. All these species were represented in Mr. Brown's former consignment; but the series of the last-named now available enables me to decide the question as to its dentition.

In *four* of these eight specimens the extra upper premolar is

¹ P. Z. S. 1877. p. 126.

² Nat. Hist. Mamm. i. p. 265.

